

VZCZCXRO1890
OO RUEHRN
DE RUEHMR #0617 3451648
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O R 111648Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY MASERU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2495
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHMR/AMEMBASSY MASERU 2834

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 000617

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

AF/S

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2016
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [LT](#)
SUBJECT: ACTING PM REQUESTS US LAW ENFORCEMENT HELP TO INVESTIGATE
VOLUNTEER'S MURDER

CLASSIFIED BY: June Carter Perry, Ambassador, EXEC , STATE.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

Request for Investigative Assistance

11. (C) On December 7, Acting Prime Minister Lehohla requested Ambassador come to his office for a 90 minute one-on-one discussion centering primarily on the GOL's request for professional investigative assistance in finding the murderer of Dutch Clinton Foundation Volunteer Samuella "Ella" Jacobina Verweij. The Prime Minister stated that despite pressure from him in his role as Minister of Home Affairs and Security, the Police Commissioner had yet to come up with any concrete evidence that her organization was seriously investigating the slaughter of this volunteer. He stated that they were not confident that the Lesotho police could either find the killers or trace the vehicle used in the assault which he claims was carried out with Israeli made military weapons. He felt the trail may have gone cold to some extent. Yet, given the fact that the organization though private in nature was an American foundation, the attack took place at the residence of Trade Minister Malie (where a bed and breakfast) is situated. The A/PM remarked that 3 other assassination attempts have taken place on government officials in Lesotho in 2006.

12. (C) In the past, Lesotho has called on Scotland Yard to assist, particularly in the death of King Moshoeshoe II, in the mid 1990's due to the ineffective work of the local police. This recent case, the Acting Prime Minister said, was one that also required outside assistance because of lack of capacity within Lesotho's own department. Furthermore, he indicated that the attempted assassination of the FOMIN in January and the successful May murder of opposition leader Bereng had yet to be solved. He felt that coming just two months before the major national elections in February, failure to solve this crime would only encourage elements within Lesotho's various political classes to make other attempts. The Ambassador stated that she would indeed make the request to U.S. law enforcement authorities to see what could be done to assist the GOL in solving this crime. (Note: Post has already contacted LEGATT in Pretoria, who has indicated he will try to come to Maseru in the next 2 weeks to work with the police on this case. End Note.)

13. (C) Lehohla went on to describe what he perceived as "renegade" elements within the police force who simply are not carrying out their duties or who have political allegiances or agendas of their own which hinder resolution of crimes. (Comment: Similar statements have been made to the Ambassador in discussions with the FOMIN who also expressed concern that inquiries into his own assassination attempt had never been

closed.)

¶4. (C) The Acting Prime Minister is eager to close the books on the Clinton Foundation volunteer's case for a number of reasons:

1) he does not trust the police and 2) he also fears that such cases left open provide a disincentive to foreigners who are willing to give not only their money, but also their time, effort and attention to help Lesotho in its fight against HIV/AIDS. In a late November meeting between the DPM and Chief of Missions from the U.S., Ireland and China as well as the UN Resident Representative and the South African Charge, he had reiterated his deep concerns about inadequacies within the police force. A memorial service in honor of this volunteer was convoked by the Government of Lesotho soon after her death and a day before her body was flown back to the Netherlands.

¶5. (C) We urge the Department to support this request and post will continue to work with Embassy Pretoria to obtain appropriate assistance from agencies present there. We agree with the Acting Prime Minister that a series of attempted assassinations undermines Lesotho's efforts to both proceed on a progressive political path as elections approach and discourages organizations and individuals who are willing to play key roles in assisting AIDS patients across the country. The Acting Prime Minister also recalled the violence of the 1998 elections and saw a parallel with the disruptions at that time and the recent heinous actions that are occurring now in the country. He would like to put a stop to this as soon as possible, particularly with the help of the U.S. in this case and overall support from international community donors.

PERRY